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of enforced idleness to prepare his case, the latter died in harness at the age of fifty-seven. That he desired to tell his story and collected material for the purpose is scarcely in doubt. But how much of the vast *corpus* which bears his name is really his ? Not until our own time was it possible to suggest an answer, and even now the experts are not unanimous. The interest in the greatest of French statesmen aroused by Hanotaux's monumental though unfinished biography forty years ago led to the project of a critical edition of the memoirs under the auspices of the French Academy. The result is before us in ten stately volumes, covering the first twenty years of the reign of Louis XIII. Three supplementary volumes discuss the material from various points of view.

"Memoirs" is a misleading term, and it was not the choice of Richelieu himself. His plan was to produce a history of the reign of the monarch whom he served, but in the literal sense it is not his work. There are traces of his hand in the early portions, when he relates events or conversations in the first person; but his direct interventions diminish as we advance, and in the later volumes they disappear. We have to deal, not with a personal record, but with materials collected for a special purpose, like the papers of Crispi and Stresemann in our own time. Richelieu's own projected title appears to have been "L'histoire du roi." Batiffol, the accomplished historian of Louis XIII, argues that though his papers were used by his secretaries after his death, he knew nothing of the plan. Other experts, with Hanotaux at their head, pronounce it an authentic work, based on documents from his Cabinet and carried out by his secretaries with his direct

collaboration. Passages may well have been dictated and larger portions revised. The founder of the Academic Fran\$aise was a ready writer and he thirsted for literary fame. Occasionally we seem to get nearer to the man himself, but it is only for a moment. There are no piquant revelations, no *historiettes* of the type beloved by his contemporaries. It is a severe, unadorned story, almost entirely in the third person. It can never become popular, for it is too long and too im-personal. Yet no student of seventeenth century France can ignore its claims, for the writers stood very near to the events they describe. We get closer to the great Cardinal in his *Testament Politique*, published in 1687, which reveals, not what he accomplished, but the spirit in which he worked.